



BHS Young Volunteers' Guidance Note

We warmly welcome volunteers as part of our flexible and supportive volunteering community. To make sure everyone has a safe, positive, and enjoyable experience, we also need to ensure we have the right insurance, capacity, resources, and systems in place, and that volunteers have the appropriate skills and suitability for their role. For these reasons, we are only able to accept volunteers from the age of 16.

Volunteer Enquiry

Young people aged 16–18 are very welcome to [apply](#) to volunteer with us. As part of the process, they will be asked to provide the contact details of a parent or guardian. These details will be used to seek parental or guardian consent, to make sure the young person is fully supported while volunteering with BHS.

Assessment

If we receive an enquiry from someone under the age of 18, we will carry out our usual volunteer suitability assessment, alongside some additional considerations to ensure the young person is well supported. These include:

- Whether there is a minimum age requirement for the role
- Any safeguarding considerations, including making sure the role does not involve regular one-to-one contact with an employee or another volunteer
- The potential impact of the role on education, ensuring that volunteering will not negatively affect the applicant's ability to attend school or college

These checks help us provide a safe, positive, and balanced volunteering experience for younger volunteers.

During this assessment we will not make assumptions about the applicant's skills or experience but use the facts available to us. If we decide they are not suitable for the role they are enquiring about we will consider if there are other roles in which they could volunteer. If you would like to recruit or welcome a younger volunteer to your team but you aren't sure how to proceed, contact the Volunteer Support Team or your Regional/National Manager. If we decide that the volunteer is suitable for the role, we will follow the usual volunteer recruitment process.

Group Volunteering

You may occasionally be contacted by schools or youth organisations looking to involve groups of young people in volunteering.

The first thing to consider is whether you have a suitable opportunity available. In most cases, groups are looking for one-off activities or events, such as a bridleway clearance day or a fundraising opportunity.

If you do have a suitable activity, it's important to check that the group organiser can provide enough leaders to supervise the young people. They should also be willing to support the planning and preparation of any required event or project risk assessments.

Group volunteering can be very rewarding, but it can also be challenging to coordinate. Clear and ongoing communication with the group organiser is essential to understand everyone's needs, agree expectations, and help the day run smoothly.

If you are unsure whether offering a group volunteering opportunity is the right option, please contact your Regional or National Manager, or the Volunteer Support Team, who will be happy to discuss this with you and offer guidance.

Attendance of non-volunteers

Volunteers may sometimes ask if they can bring their children, or a young relative or ward, with them while volunteering. In these situations, it's important to consider whether it is appropriate for a young or vulnerable person to be present, and whether their attendance could affect the volunteer's ability to carry out their role safely and effectively.

If you are confident that there are no concerns with the young person attending, it should be made clear to the volunteer that the young person's supervision and wellbeing remain entirely their responsibility. Any potential risks should be identified and clearly recorded as part of the activity or event risk assessment.

If the young person will be actively volunteering rather than simply observing, they must be formally registered by completing an Occasional Volunteer form.

Safeguarding Young Volunteers

Any concerns about young volunteers should be brought to the attention of BHS Safeguarding Team on 02476 840746 or safeguarding@bhs.org.uk. You can find our Safeguarding policies on our website: <https://www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/how-we-operate/our-policies/safeguarding/>

If there is an emergency or you believe that someone is in immediate danger, contact the police by telephoning 999 as soon as possible.

If the matter is not an emergency but you are concerned that a child, young person is at risk of harm, contact the police by telephoning 101 without delay. You can also contact your local authority social care team.

Other contacts

British Equestrian (BEF) safeguarding@bef.co.uk or call 02476 698871
NSPCC 24-hour Safeguarding Hotline: 0808 800 5000

If you contact the police or local authority in relation to a safeguarding concern which relates to BHS, you must inform BHS Safeguarding Team without delay.